



## Barrage of marriage applications prompts new D.C. center to open

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By Thomas Warren

WASHINGTON - The D.C. Superior Court has opened a marriage license application center to handle an increase of applications since the Supreme Court ruling on gay marriage in June.

The center will be housed in Room 4555 which is adjacent to the court's old Marriage Bureau, says spokeswoman Leah Gurowitz.

And, that's not all.

"We have a second ceremony room that will open on Monday (Sept. 16), so that we can be doing two weddings at a time," Gurowitz says.

She estimates that the extra room will allow the court to perform about 24 marriages a day, which is more than double the current level at 10 per day.

The extra staffing should also allow the court to revise its marriage ceremony schedule. Gurowitz says they're currently in the process of calling couples to reschedule their dates.

"We'll be able to set up wedding dates in September and October as opposed to previously we were starting to set the weddings into the latter part of November," she says.

At issue was the volume of applications that poured in after the Supreme Court decision in *U.S. v. Windsor* on June 26 - which struck down a law that denied federal benefits to same-sex couples.

"That seemed to be a turning point and cause for a lot of these applications, but, again, we don't inquire as to the reasons behind someone's marriage," Gurowitz says.

The District of Columbia has really only seen one other instance for such an immediate spike in marriage application filings.

"There's always seasonal trends and year-to-year trends, but the only time we're really seen a significant increase has been in the first few months after same-sex marriage was legalized in D.C.," says Gurowitz.

Former D.C. mayor Adrian Fenty signed the same-sex marriage bill into law in 2009.

By law, couples who apply for marriage licenses in D.C must wait three days before the Marriage Bureau may issue a license. The fee is \$35, plus \$10 for the certificate.